



June 22, 2021

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am writing to convey my support for the City of Manchester, New Hampshire's application for a FY 2021 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant for the South Millyard area of Manchester.

Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) is a private, nonprofit institution with an 87-year history of educating traditional-aged students and working adults. Now serving more than 160,000 learners worldwide, SNHU offers over 300 accredited undergraduate, graduate and certificate programs, available online and on its 300-acre campus in Manchester, NH. Recognized as the "Most Innovative" regional university by U.S. News & World Report and one of the fastest-growing universities in the country, SNHU is committed to expanding access to high quality, affordable pathways that meet the needs of each learner. Notably, not only did SNHU have one of the lowest tuition rates in the nation, frozen since 2012, but in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the economic downturn, and the great uncertainty facing higher education, SNHU is accelerating its work to develop new campus-based models that will bring campus tuition down to \$10,000 per year, a 61 percent reduction from our current rate.

SNHU employs over 4,000 people in the state of New Hampshire, with the majority working in Manchester. The South Millyard area is a vital part of our operations, housing staff that service our learners worldwide. Over the past several years, SNHU has made significant investments in the Millyard, building a parking structure with 1900 spots and wrapping up a multi-million dollar renovation project that will provide offices for 2500 employees. Despite our new parking structure, parking remains a key constraint. Moreover, even with these investments, we will likely max out on office space in 2023 and need to expand.

Accessibility, commutability and connectivity to and within the South Millyard area are vital to our success, to our ability to attract and retain staff and to our decision whether to expand operations in the area. Our property at 33/55 South Commercial Street, Manchester, is immediately adjacent to the project area where transportation improvements are proposed by the City.

We believe the Manchester project provides an innovative approach to invest in intermodal project that will reweave the lost street and pedestrian connections to connect a growing but detached part of our community. Specifically the project will help:

- Increase the flow of workers, residents, goods and services and mitigate existing extreme congestion by creating new connections to the existing street network and highway system at multiple points to/from South Millyard,
- Provide increased transportation choices and safety by improving pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, accessibility, comfort and safety,
- Creating a completely new multi-modal transportation corridor by repurposing the disused Boston & Maine rail bed
- Create the opportunity for the location and establishment of the Multi-Modal Transportation Hub in central location to serve travelers using multiple types of transportation to major attractions and land uses such as the new baseball stadium, educational institutions, resident commuters and future railroad connections.
- Create development opportunities for infill development of multi-use buildings including offices, manufacturing, housing and dynamic regional attractions
- Improve a major gateway intersection at Queen City Avenue/Cilley Road/South Willow Street

The RAISE grant will provide a transformative opportunity for investment in intermodal connectivity for the movement of people and goods at the center of Manchester, with positive effects rippling throughout the city and Central New Hampshire region. Over the past ten years the South Millyard has evolved from its historic use as an area of heavy industry with supporting rail corridors to an area of vibrant mixed uses including educational institutions, multi-unit housing, restaurants, shopping, sports and entertainment, among other dynamic activities. However, this ongoing growth is now constrained by an outdated and disconnected transportation network.

Accordingly, I strongly support the application of the City of Manchester, NH for a FY 2021 RAISE grant. I request that you give all due attention to the application for this innovative project and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Kenneth Lee
Chief Financial Officer
Southern New Hampshire University

CC: City of Manchester Department of Public Works